

CHAPTER 22: I WANT TO KNOW

ONE
WEEK
PASSED.

IN THE END,
I DIDN'T
GO TO THE
BRIDGE.

IT'S
SO NICE
HAVING
A MAN
AROUND.

AT THE
SAME TIME,
I WENT
BACK TO
MY OLD
JOB.

...THAT I WAS
BUSY WITH
MIDTERMS...

MY
EXCUSE
FOR NOT
GOING
WAS...

IT'S
NOT LIKE
IT WAS
BECAUSE
OF THOSE
WORDS.

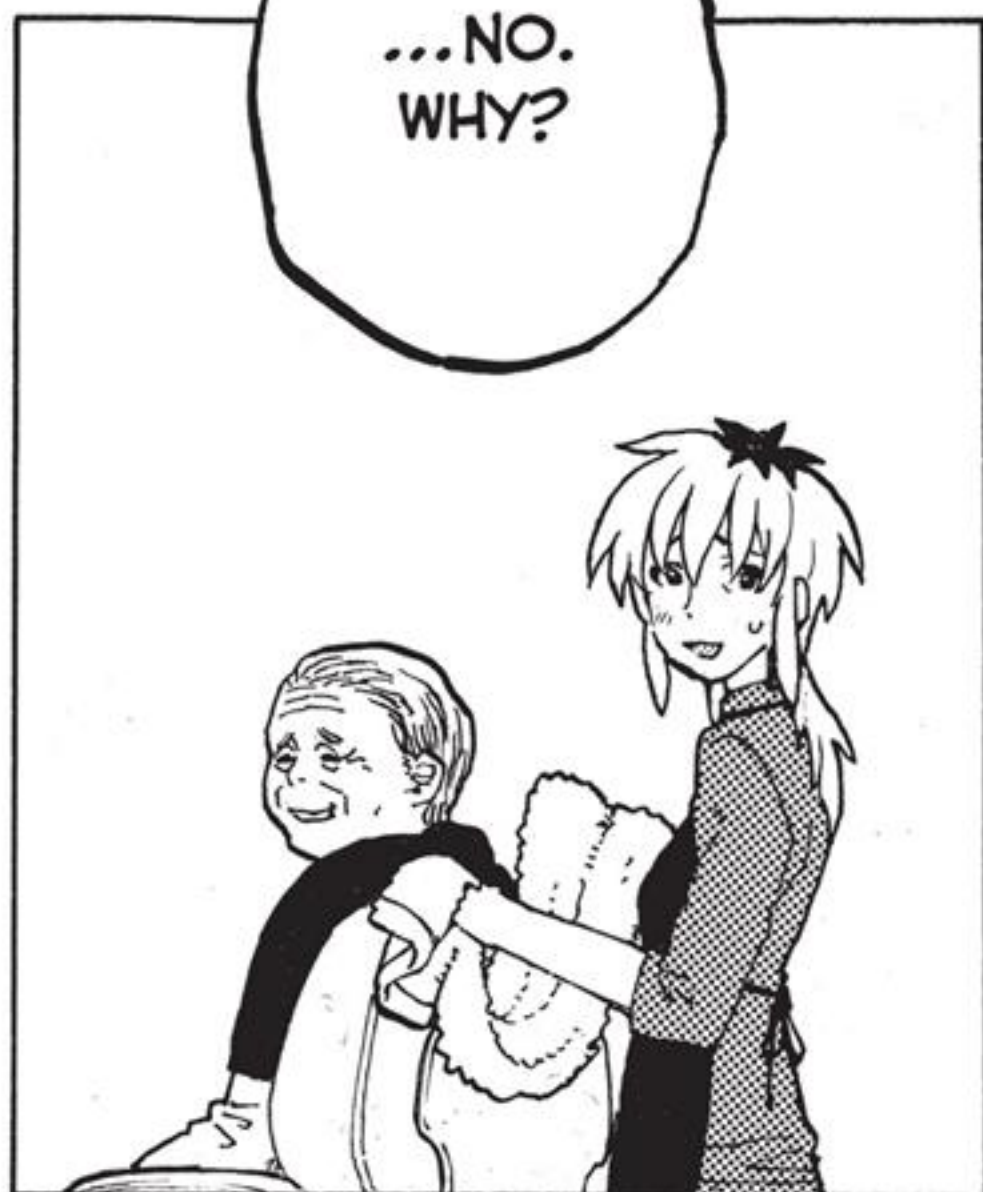
NOT
AT
ALL.

"PRETEND
FRIENDS"!

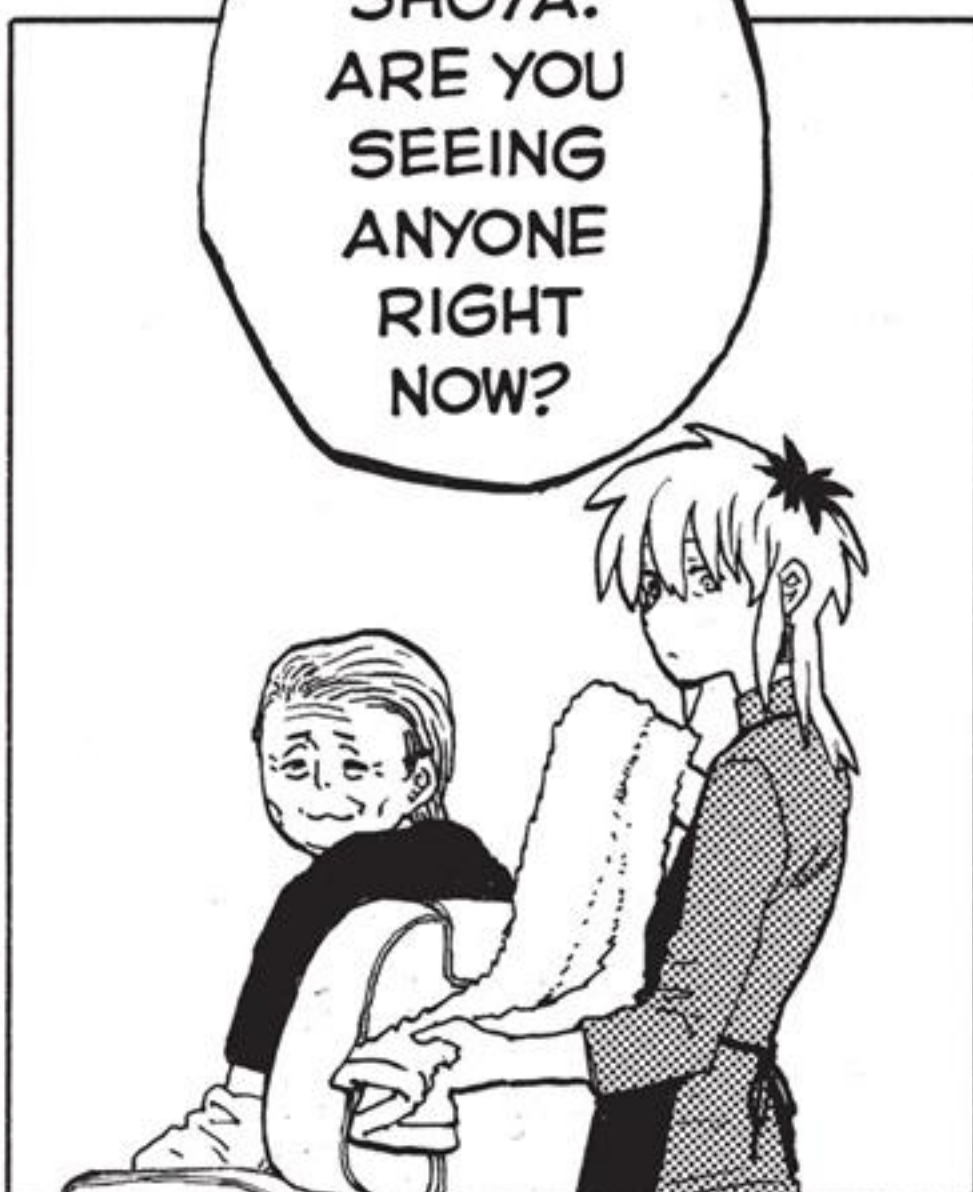
ARE YOU
FORCING
YOURSELF
TO HANG
OUT WITH
THEM?



...NO.
WHY?



HEY,
SHOYA.
ARE YOU
SEEING
ANYONE
RIGHT
NOW?



...A
FRIEND
?



THEN, IS
THAT
NAOKA
PERSON
...

NO, I
WAS JUST
PERSONALLY
INTERESTED.

ALWAYS
LIKED



WAS IT
SHOKO?
DID SHE
TELL YOU TO
ASK THAT?

SHE'S NOT A
"FRIEND." SHE'S
SOMETHING BELOW
THAT. LIKE, JUST
ANOTHER FACE
IN THE CROWD?
YOU KNOW?
SOMETHING
LIKE THAT?

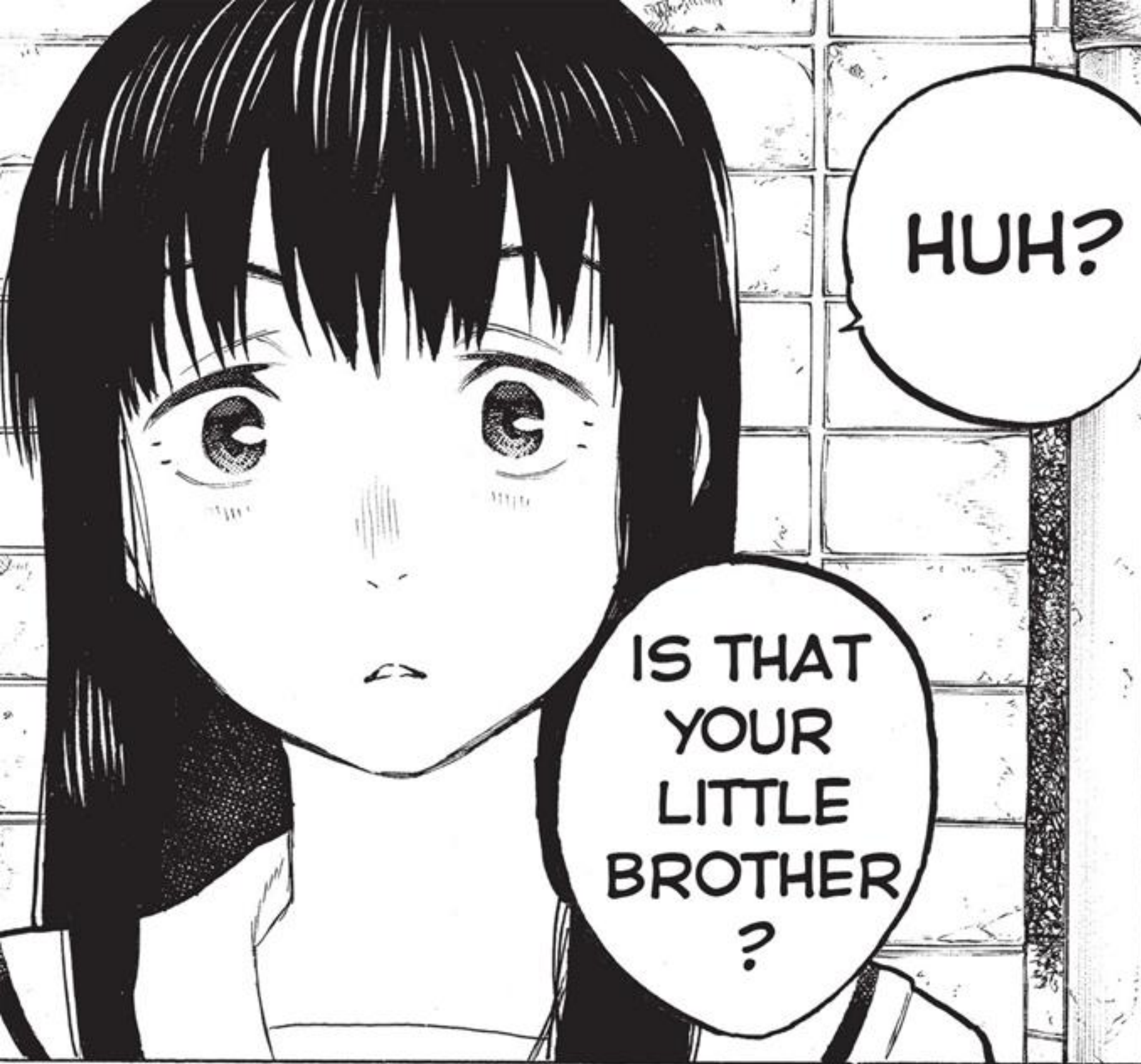


WE'RE
CLASS-
MATES!
JUST OLD
CLASS-
MATES!

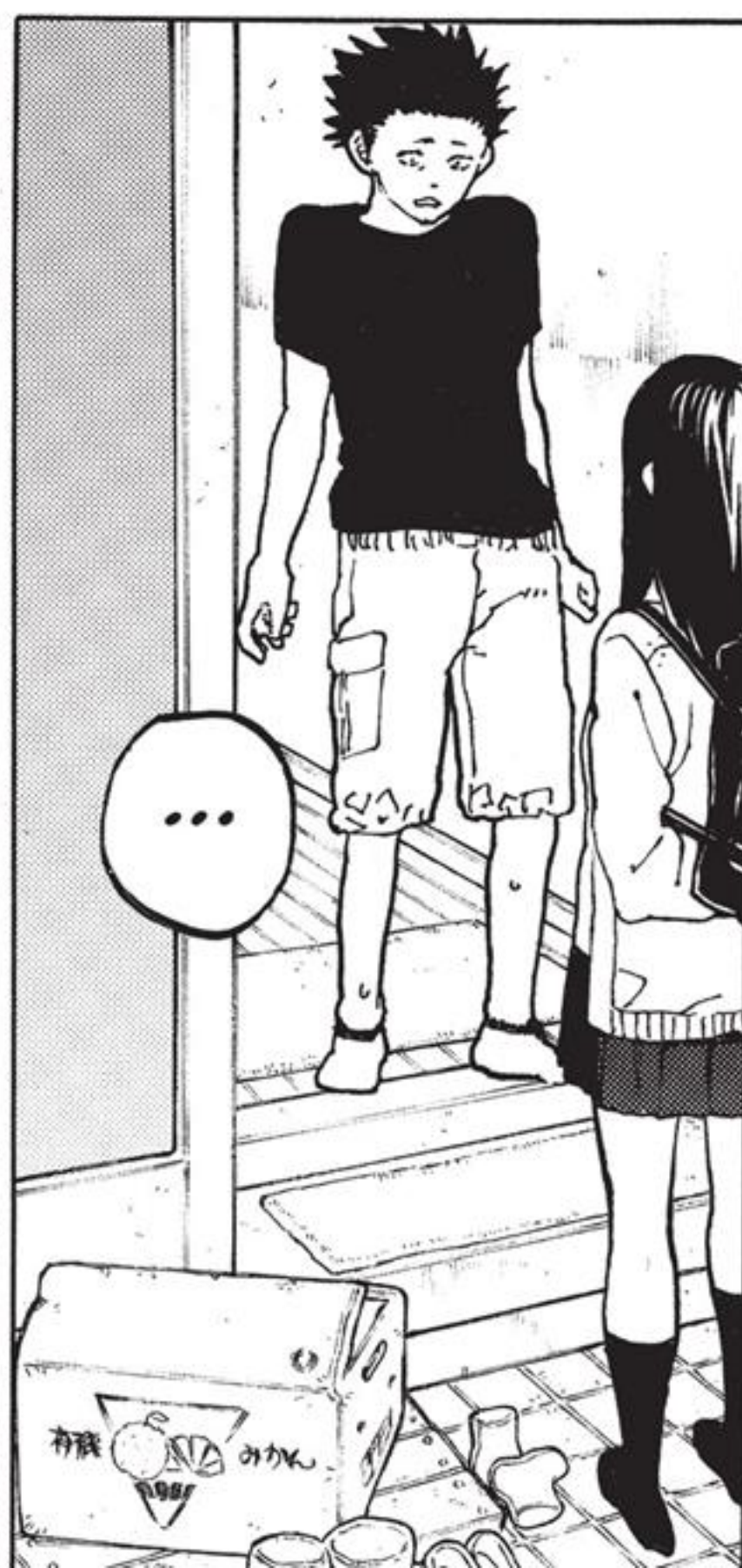
HUH? WHAT?
WHERE'D
YOU GET
THAT IDEA?

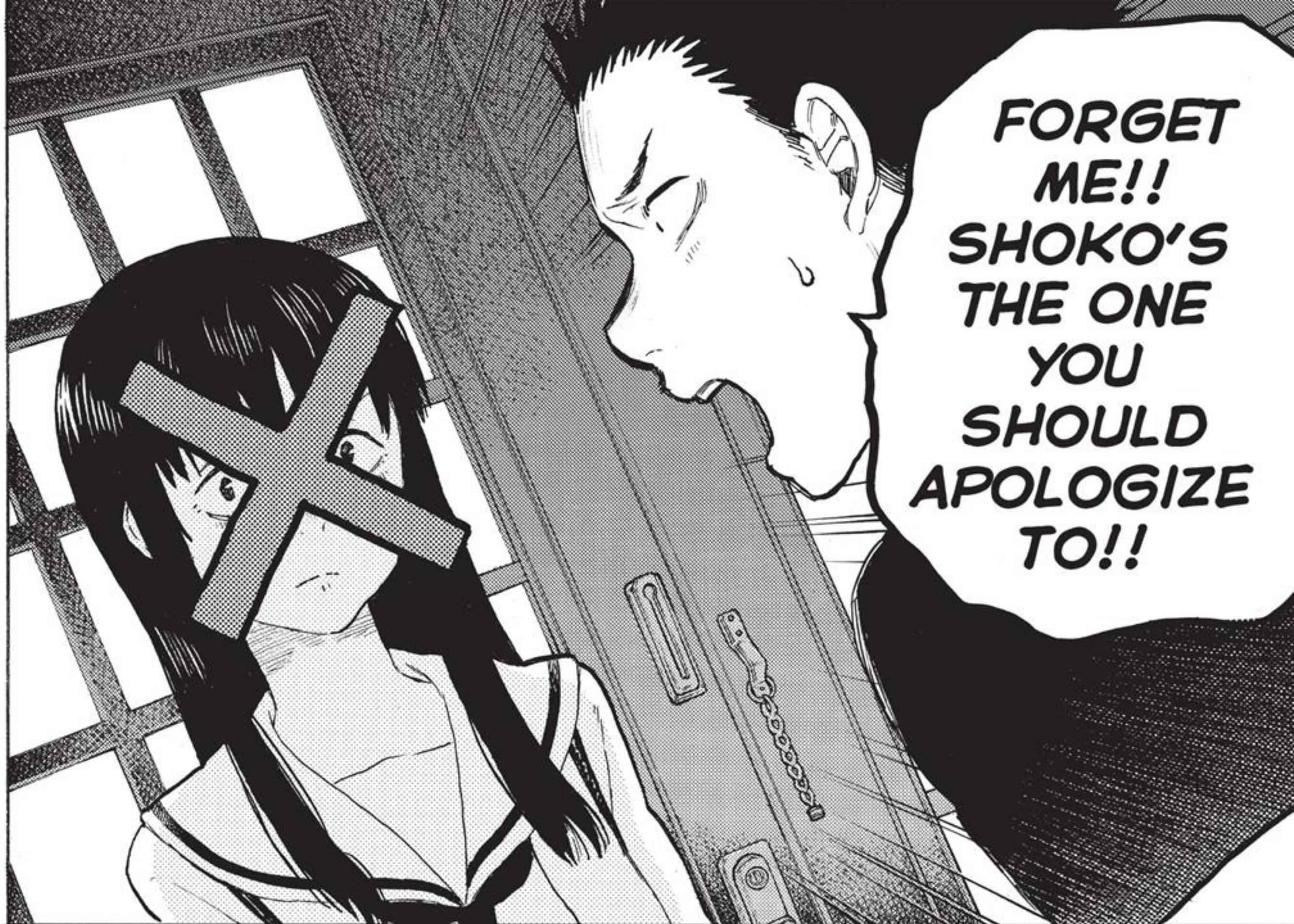




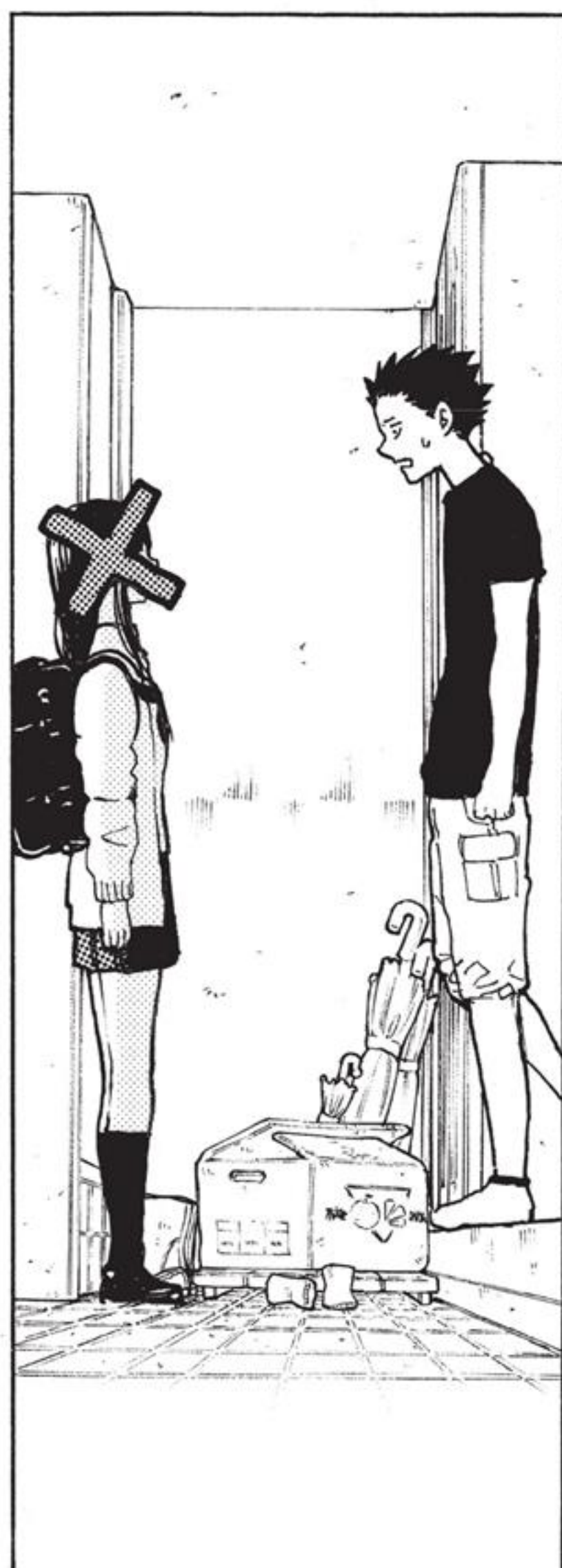








**FORGET
ME!!
SHOKO'S
THE ONE
YOU
SHOULD
APOLOGIZE
TO!!**



**APOLOGIZE
TO SHOKO,
AND IF SHE
FORGIVES
YOU...**

**THEN, I'LL
ACCEPT
YOUR
APOLOGY,
TOO!**

**H
U
H
?!**



**YOU USED TO
BADMOUTH
HER ALL
THE TIME,
RIGHT?!**

**NOT TO
MENTION
WHAT YOU
DID LAST
WEEK!**



WHAT, DO
YOU THINK
YOU'RE HER
GUARDIAN
OR
SOMETHING?

I ONLY
WANTED TO
APOLOGIZE
TO YOU.
WHERE DOES
NISHIMIYA
FIT INTO
THIS?!



WHAT'S THAT
SUPPOSED TO
MEAN?
YOU'RE REALLY
CREEPING ME
OUT NOW...



I WANT
YOURS!

I DON'T
WANT
NISHIMIYA'S
FORGIVE-
NESS!

KLAK

KLAK



SIGH

...



I JUST
WANTED...
TO GET
BACK...

OUR TIME
TOGETHER
...

THE TIME
NISHIMIYA
TOOK
FROM US!







SHO-
YA.



OKAY?
SO
DON'T
LET IT
BOTHER
YOU.

SIS
USES IT
ON ME,
TOO.

THAT
POLITE
SMILE OF
HERS IS
JUST A
HABIT.



IF YOU
DON'T WANT
ME TRYING
TO CHEER
YOU UP
ANYMORE...

...THEN STOP
ALL THIS
BROODING.

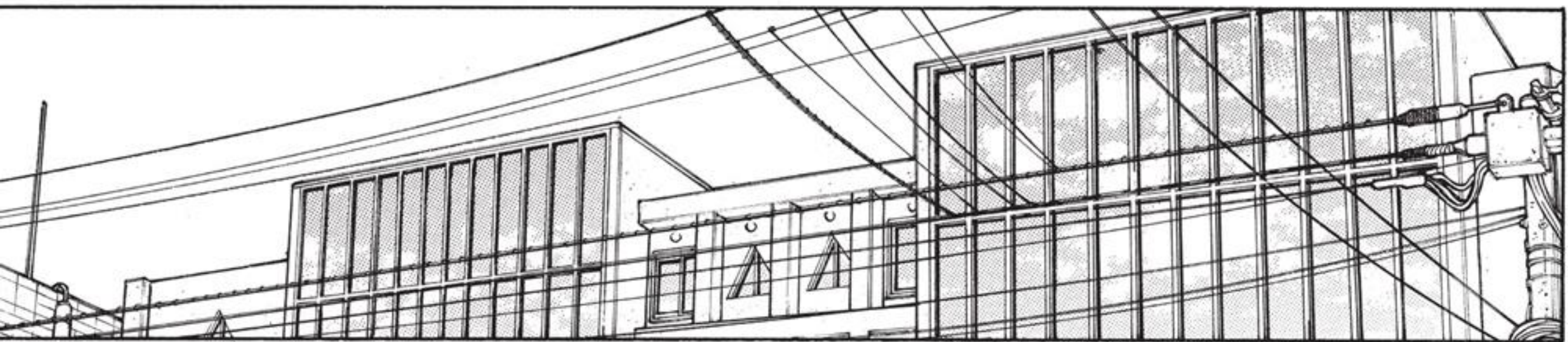


YUZU-
RU...



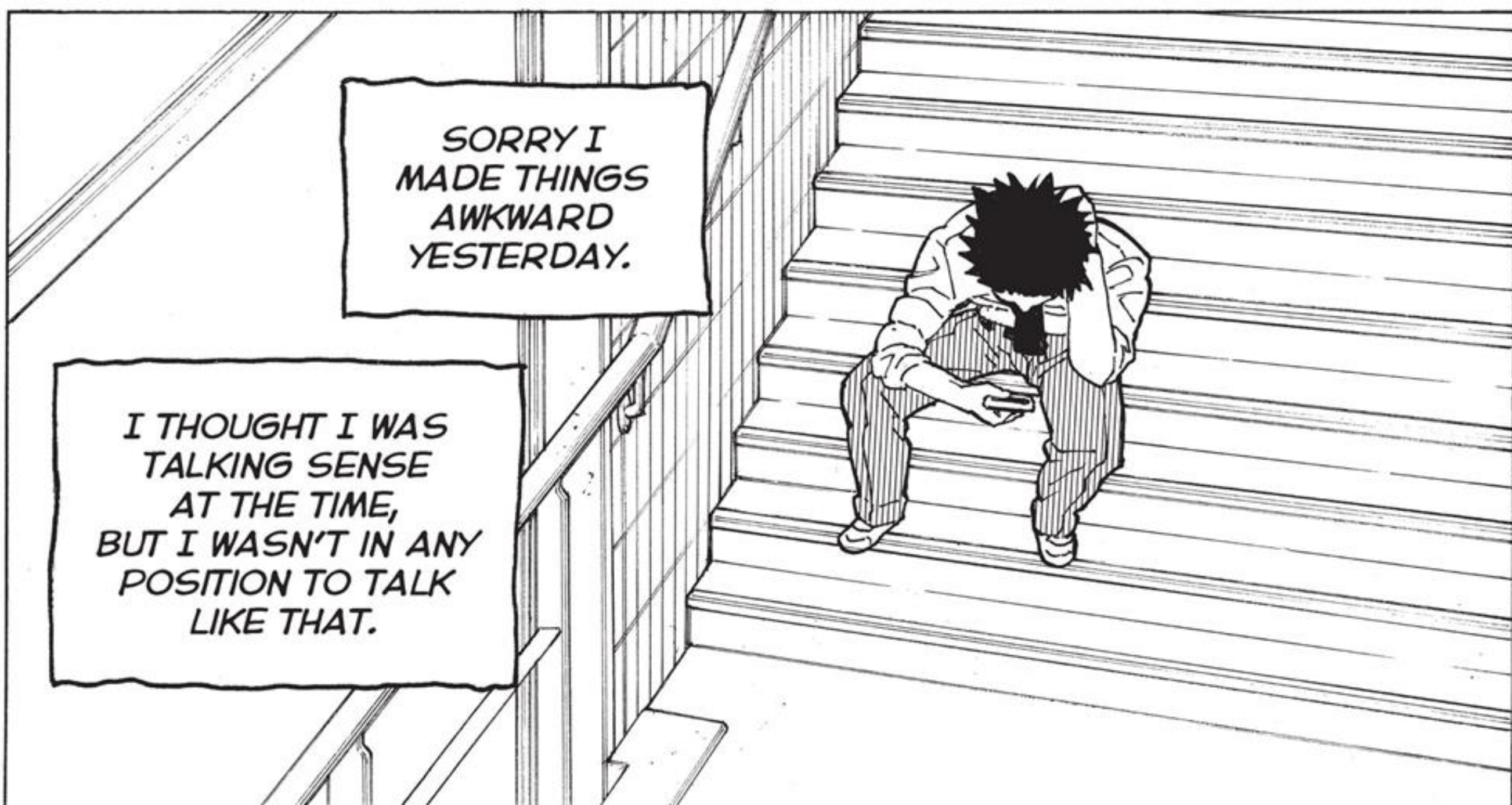
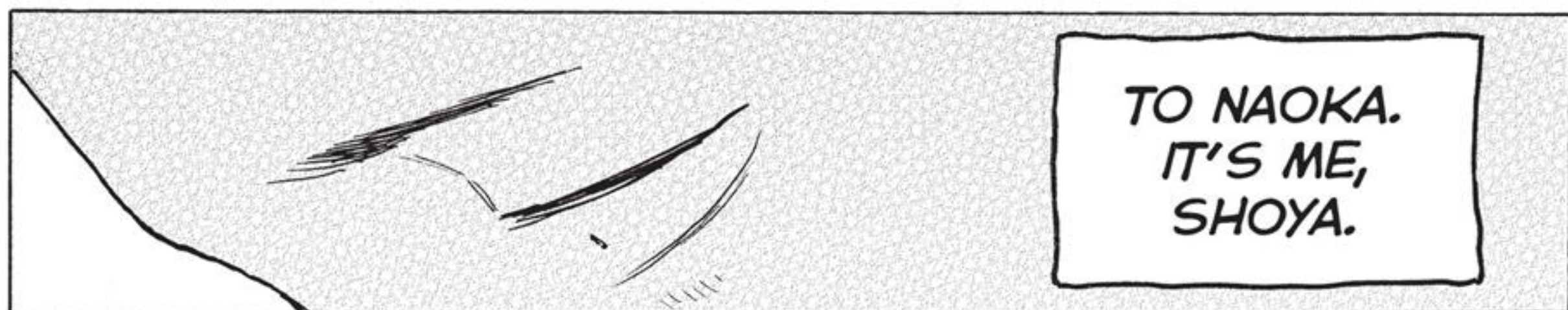
I THINK
IT'S A
CHANGE
FOR THE
BETTER.

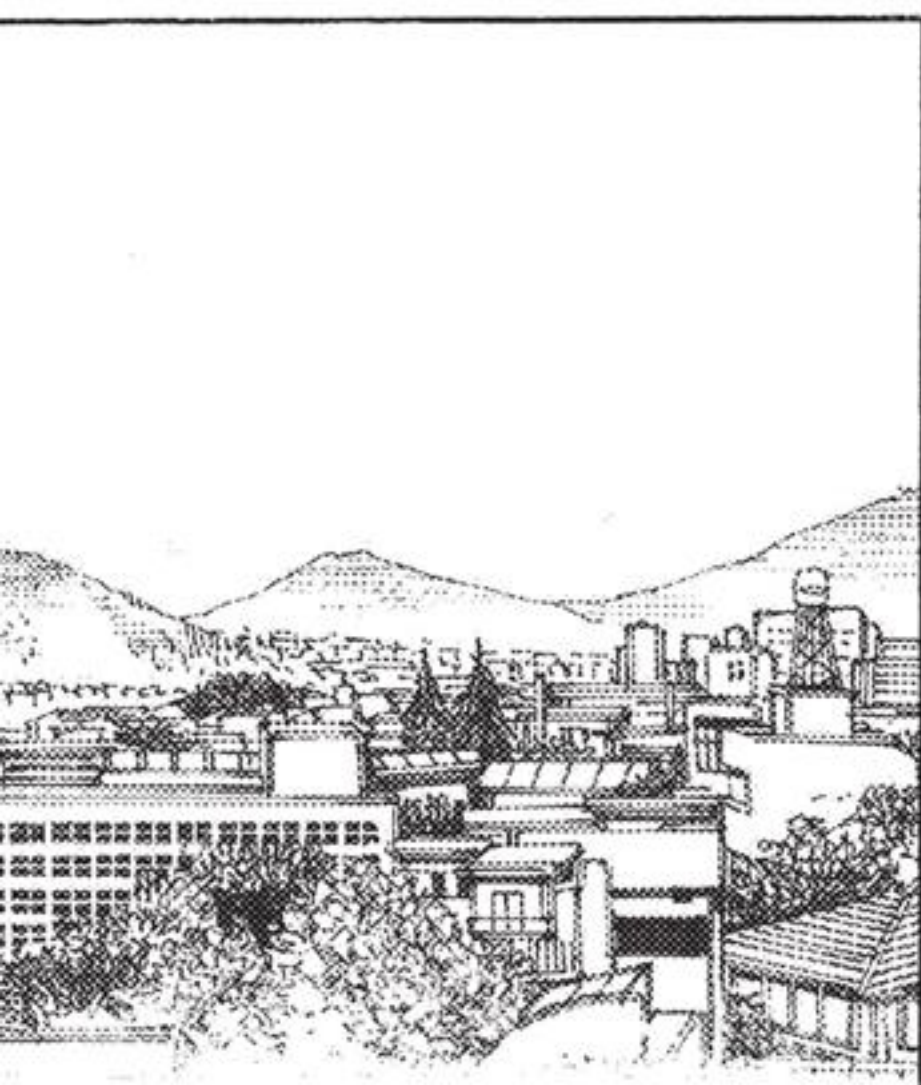
IN FACT,
SHE'S BECOME
A LOT MORE
EXPRESSIVE
SINCE YOU
SHOWED
UP.





SUB: **TO NAOKA**





IT WAS
BECAUSE
I COULDN'T
BELIEVE IT
WHEN YOU
SMILED AT ME.

IT WASN'T
BECAUSE OF A
TEST OR MY
JOB THAT I
COULDN'T COME
TO THE BRIDGE
TO SEE YOU
THE OTHER DAY.

SHO-
KO...

"WHAT
WERE
YOU
TALKING
ABOUT?"

"WHAT?"

I WANT
TO KNOW...
WHAT IT
IS YOU'RE
THINKING.



HEY
THERE,
SHOYA.

OH.





WHERE'S SHOKO?

SHE JUST LEFT BECAUSE HER STOMACH WAS HURTING.



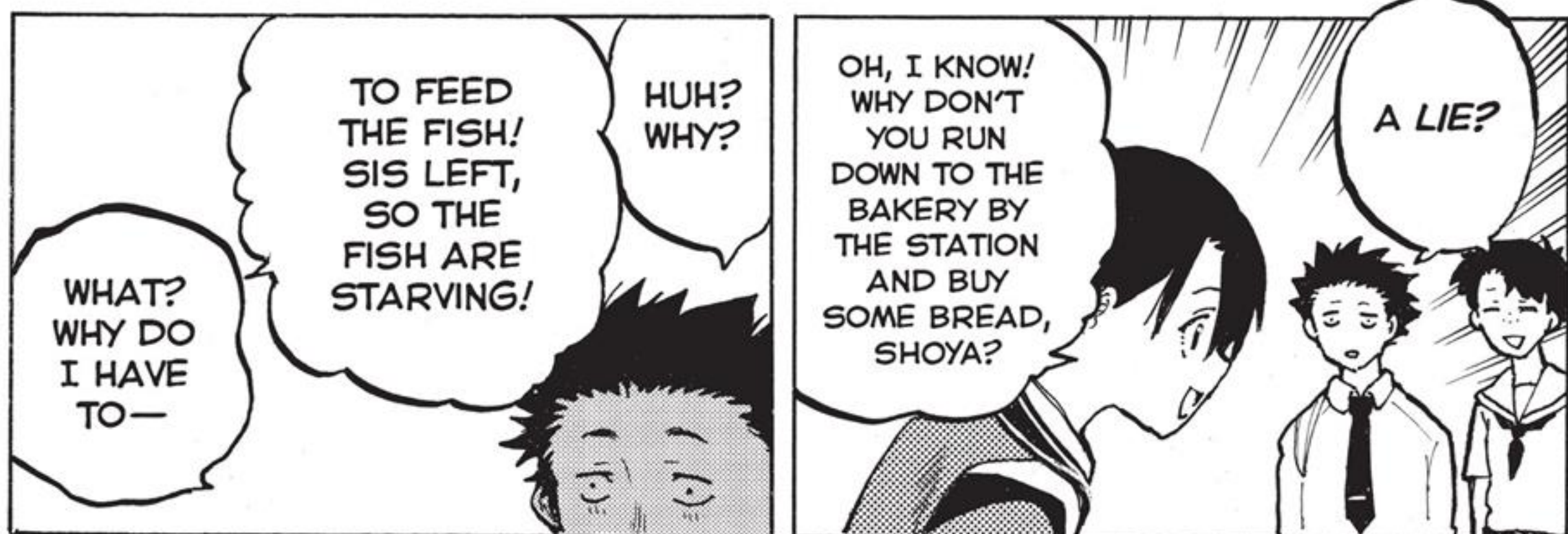
HUH?



OH, I THINK IT WAS A LIE ANYWAY.

OH... IS SHE OKAY?

WHAT? AW, MAN...



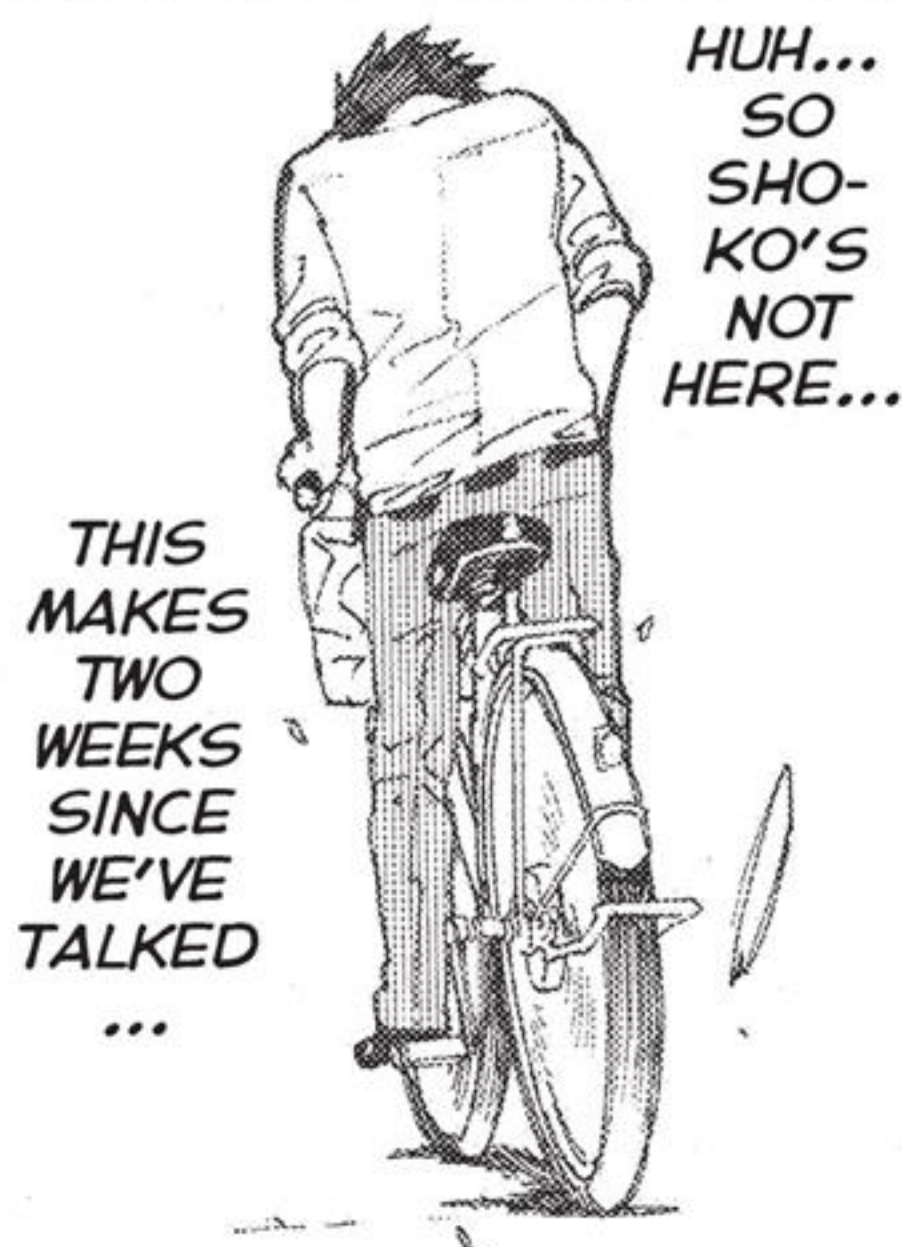
WHAT? WHY DO I HAVE TO—

TO FEED THE FISH! SIS LEFT, SO THE FISH ARE STARVING!

HUH? WHY?

OH, I KNOW! WHY DON'T YOU RUN DOWN TO THE BAKERY BY THE STATION AND BUY SOME BREAD, SHOYA?

A LIE?



THIS MAKES TWO WEEKS SINCE WE'VE TALKED ...

HUH... SO SHO-KO'S NOT HERE...



WHAT A PAIN IN THE BUTT!

AND IT HAS TO BE FROM THE BAKERY BY THE STATION! THAT'S THEIR FAVORITE!

JUST GO ALREADY!

フイ SHOVE



I'D LIKE TO TELL
YOU WHAT I WAS
GOING TO SAY AT
THE BRIDGE TODAY.

IS YOUR
STOMACH
ALL RIGHT?

TO NISHI-
MIYA.



WELL, THIS IS
WHAT SHE SAID
ABOUT US:

YOU KNOW WHEN
YOU WANTED
TO KNOW WHAT
NAOKA SAID?



CAN YOU
BELIEVE
THAT?



AND SAID
WE WERE ONLY
"PRETEND
FRIENDS."



SHE ASKED IF I
WAS "FORCING
MYSELF" TO HANG
OUT WITH YOU GUYS.

JINGA-
LING



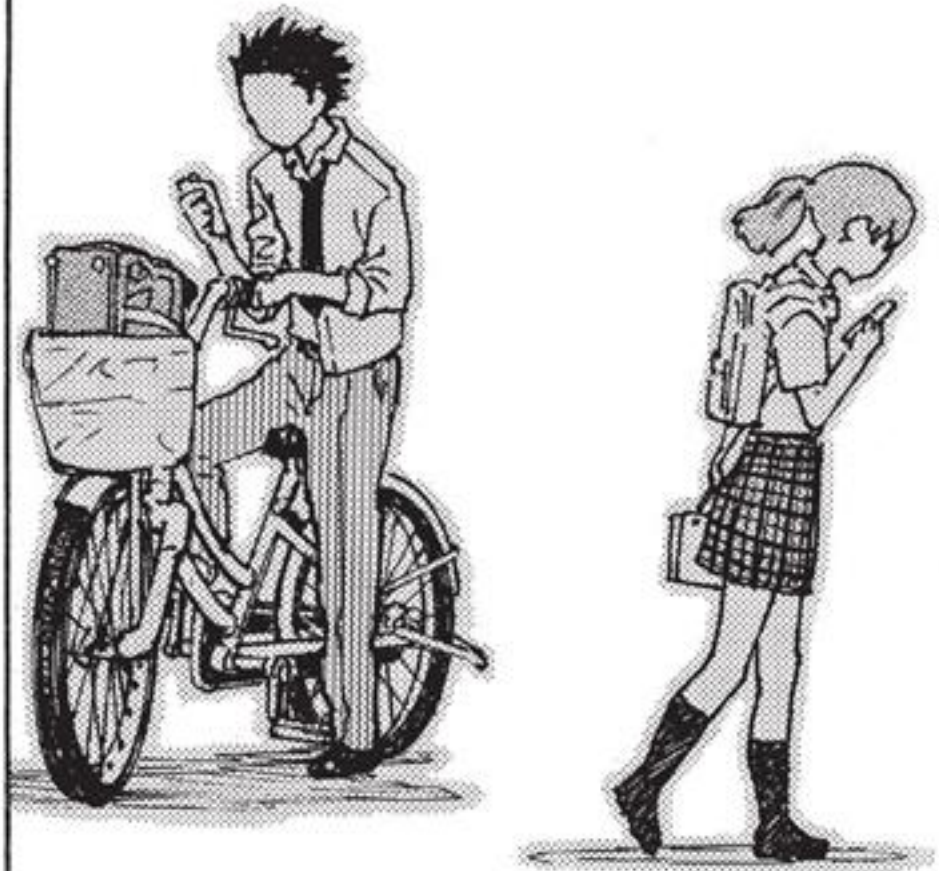
**I WAS WONDERING
THE SAME THING.**



SO THAT NO ONE
CAN CALL
US "PRETEND
FRIENDS" AGAIN...



BUT I DON'T WANT
TO BE "PRETEND
FRIENDS" EITHER.



...I WANT TO
GET TO KNOW
YOU BETTER.